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## I.—FATALISM OF THE GREEKS.

To the minds of the many, emphatic iteration and reiteration of an assertion has all the force of truth. For people in general are prone to spare themselves the trouble and exertion of the close thinking that results in logical conclusions and so take the easier course of accepting ready-made opinions. Instead of demanding proof before according belief, they are content to take fallacies for facts, if widely spread abroad and voiced repeatedly. When a belief, however much at variance with the facts of the case, has become firmly established in the minds of the many, because asserted many times by many writers, to disprove it is no easy task even when it is such a perversion of the truth as the current opinion that the Greeks are fatalists.

What do we mean by fatalism? That man is not master of his fate but that fate masters him. Do what he will he cannot escape his destiny. Fate is irresistible, unconquerable and its decrees are absolute. The Turk is a fatalist; so he goes into battle with the firm conviction that if death is to be his portion, be he a brave man or a coward, death will come all the same. However, he believes, if he meets his doom with heroic valor, he will be amply rewarded in the world hereafter, so his fatalism is brightened and cheered by a glad hope which is an incentive to deeds of daring, for fatalism in itself tends to inaction and despair. Napoleon the Third was a fatalist and Zola has given a wonderful portrayal of this in *La Débâcle*, *The Downfall*. Whether Zola represents Napoleon truthfully or not is aside from the question here; what

concerns us is the description of a fatalist as he has described one in the person of Napoleon. Take this passage where Napoleon presents himself on the battlefield. "Entirely unattended, he rode forward into the midst of the storm of shot and shell, calmly, unhurriedly, with his unvarying air of resigned indifference, the air of one who goes to meet his appointed fate. He rode forward, controlling his charger to a slow walk. For the space of a hundred yards he thus rode forward, then halted, awaiting the death he had come there to seek. The bullets fell in concert with a music like the fierce autumnal blast; a shell burst in front of him and covered him with earth. He maintained his attitude of patient waiting. His steed with distended eyes and quivering frame, instinctively recoiled before the grim presence who was so close at hand and yet refused to smite horse or rider. At last the trying experience came to an end, and the Emperor, with his stoic fatalism, understanding that his time was not yet come, tranquilly retraced his steps".

G. H. Lewes in *Problems of Life and Mind*, 1-309 thus defines fatalism: Fatalism says that something must be and this something cannot be modified by any modification of the conditions.

The *Century Dictionary* says "Fatalism does not recognize the determination of all events by causes, in the ordinary sense, holding, on the contrary, that a certain foreordained result will come about, no matter what may be done to prevent it".

John Stuart Mill thus delivers himself on the subject: A fatalist believes or half believes (for nobody is a consistent fatalist) not only that whatever is about to happen will be the infallible result of the causes which produce it, but moreover, that there is no use in struggling against it, that it will happen however we may strive to prevent it.

The natural outcome is as Milman has described it in *Latin Christianity* V, 9: "It was vain to resist the wrath of God; and so a wretched fatalism bowed to a more utter prostration the cowed and spiritless race".

Fatalism benumbs and paralyzes the will, and apathy and stoical submission are the only resource. To accept the inevitable without a murmur, with passionless calm to wrap one's mantle around one's self and with bowed head to say in

impassive tone, kismet, it is ordered, this is fatalism and this is what a fatalistic belief engenders.

How can anyone attribute such a deadening doctrine as this of fatalism to a people like the Greeks with their alert minds, their power of making independent judgments, their daring spirit of adventure and unresting activity, their proud confidence in themselves that made them dare and do even what seemed impossible and their buoyant courage that rose quickly over even direst disaster? When we look at the Greeks and especially the Athenians, for Athens represented to Hellas and represents to us the highest reach of the Greeks in thought and feeling, what do we find as their characteristics? We turn to the matchless description given by Thucydides in the speech that purports to be the funeral speech of Pericles over those that had fallen in battle in the first year of the Peloponnesian War.

"The great impediment to action is in our opinion not discussion but the want of that knowledge which is gained by discussion preparatory to action. We have a peculiar power of thinking before we act and of acting too, whereas with others their boldness is ignorance and reflection brings hesitation. And they are surely to be esteemed the bravest spirits who, having the clearest sense both of the pains and pleasures of life, do not on that account shrink from danger".—Thuc. II, 40. "For we have compelled every land and every sea to open a path for our valor, and have everywhere planted eternal memorials of what is noble and good".—Thuc. II, 41. "They resigned to hope the uncertainty of the issue but in action when the task was visibly before them, it was in themselves they proudly put their trust".—Thuc. II, 42.

What is emphasized here is the intelligent calculation that entered into Athenian warfare. Their goddess is the goddess Athena, the goddess of wisdom and skill, the goddess who teaches men to put their strength and energy at the service of intelligence, to plan and contrive, to measure dangers and resources, to count the cost, not to rush into battle with blind fury and with the desperation of those who feel themselves driven on by an unswerving doom. The spirit of these Greeks is diametrically opposed to anything like fatalism. It connotes untiring energy, hopeful courage, belief in one's own powers,

confidence in skill and foresight, while fatalism depresses effort and darkens the soul and gives only the desperate courage of despair, or at best stoical fortitude.

"It was due to the valor of these men that smoke did not go up to heaven from the burning of spacious Tegea. Their choice was to leave their children a city flourishing in freedom and to lay down their own lives in the front of the battle". —Simon. fr. 102 (B<sub>gk</sub>.<sup>4</sup>). That is the Greek note, the noble choice that sets life at naught compared with the priceless treasure of freedom. Surely no fatalism in this.

Demosthenes in his matchless speech *On the Crown*, after according this high praise to the Athenians of other days that they were willing to give themselves to dangers for glory and honor, adds, "choosing what was noble and right; for all men's lives have a fixed limit in death, even if they should shut themselves up in a chamber and keep guard, but good men ought to put their hand to all that is noble on every occasion, holding before themselves as a shield the hope of good and bear whatever the god gives, nobly" (XVIII, 97). How does this differ from what we should say? Do what is right and leave the issue with God. Not once throughout this eloquent speech is there a word of a fate that held the Athenians in its firm grip and doomed them relentlessly to defeat and overthrow. What does he say? "If Thessaly had had only one man and Arcadia one who had adopted the same policy as I, none of the Hellenes on the further or on the hither side of Thermopylae would have experienced the present evils but all would have dwelt in their countries, free and autonomous in perfect fearlessness, in safety and happiness" (XVIII, 304). Are these the words of a man who believes in the resistless oncoming of a dread doom? And again he speaks even more plainly: "The man who feels he has been born only for his parents awaits the death of fate and the natural death, but he who feels he was born for his country will die that he may not see her suffer slavery and will count insults and loss of honor that he must bear in an enslaved state, more to be feared than death" (XVIII, 205). In other words, the patriot is ready to sacrifice his life on the altar of his country's need but the stay-at-home will not risk his personal safety on any battlefields but waits ingloriously at home till death that comes to all, comes even to

him. Not once in the speech are we made to feel that the Athenians were foredoomed to defeat and were but puppets in the iron clutch of fate. Instead, he portrays in vivid speech the conditions that favored Philip in his aggressions and shows himself a statesman of keenest insight in his analysis of causes that contributed to the final triumph of Macedonia. Croiset, *Manuel d' Histoire de la Lit. Grecque*, p. 433, says: "Thucydide croit que les choses de la nature sont gouvernées par des lois régulières . . . S'il parle de la fortune (τύχη), nulle part il n'en fait une divinité: ce n'est pour lui que le nom de l'imprévu et de l'inconnaissable. Dans les choses politiques comme dans la nature, il croit à des causes intelligibles, purement humaines, qu'il s'agit de découvrir". Even in the *Odyssey*, what do we find in the first book beginning with line 32? "Lo, now how falsely mortals blame the gods; for they say evils come from us whereas they even of themselves have woes beyond fate (contrary to fate) ὑπὲρ μόρον through their own follies" and then Zeus tells how he sent Hermes to warn Aegisthus not to slay Agamemnon and wed Clytemnestra, for if he should do this, punishment would come upon him from Orestes later on, but though Hermes himself gave the warning, Aegisthus paid no heed and suffered the consequences.

In the *Oedipus at Colonus* of Sophocles, a direful threat is pronounced upon Polyneikes by Oedipus if he make the intended attack upon Thebes, and Antigone pleads with her brother to turn back but in vain:

1416-19 στρέψαι στράτευμ' ἐς Ἄργος ὡς τάχιστα γε,  
καὶ μὴ σέ τ' αὐτὸν καὶ πόλιν διεργάσῃ.

Turn back thy host to Argos with all speed,  
And ruin not thyself and Thebes as well.

ἀλλ' οὐχ οἶόν τε. πῶς γὰρ αὐθις ἂν πάλιν στράτευμ' ἄγοιμι ταῦτόν,  
εἰσάπαξ τρέσας;

That cannot be. How could I lead again  
An army that has seen their leader quail? Storr's tr.

So then she says:

1423-4 ὀρᾷς τὰ τοῦδ' οὖν ὡς ἐς ὀρθὸν ἐκφέρει  
μαντεύμαθ', δὲ σφῶν θάνατον ἐξ ἀμφοῖν θροεῖ;

Wilt thou then bring to pass his prophecies  
Who threatens mutual slaughter to you both?

He had power of choice but he willed to go and his doom was sealed by himself.

It is worthy of note that Polyneikes who has come of his own volition with foreign aid against his native city makes this charge: "For this I hold thy Erinyes to be the cause",

1299 τὴν σὴν ἐρινὺν αἰτίαν εἶναι λέγω.

But Oedipus in bitterest anger heaps reproaches upon him for his cruel lack of filial feeling. "It is thou that hast brought my days to this anguish; 'tis thou hast thrust me out, to thee I owe it that I wander, begging my daily bread from strangers. And had these daughters not been born to be my comfort, verily I had been dead, for aught of help from thee".

1362 ff. σὸν γάρ με μόχθῳ τῷδ' ἔθηκας ἔντροφον  
σύ μ' ἐξέωσας, ἐκ σέθεν δ' ἀλώμενος  
ἄλλους ἐπαιτῶ τὸν καθ' ἡμέραν βίον.  
εἰ δ' ἐξέφυσα τάσδε μὴ μαντῆ τροφούς  
τὰς παῖδας, ἣ τὰν οὐκ ἂν ᾗ τὸ σὸν μέρος.

"But now moved by some god and by a sinful mind, an evil rivalry has seized them".

371 f. νῦν δ' ἐκ θεῶν τοῦ κάλιτηρίου φρενός  
εἰσῆλθε τοῖν τριῖς ἀθλοῖν ἕρις κακή.

Hawthorne in his story of the Prophetic Pictures well expresses the futility of warning and even of sure prophecy. An artist gifted with a marvellous insight paints the portraits of two young people who have just been wedded and discerning a taint of madness in the young man, in a subtle way he gives it expression in the portrait. The bride detects it and is filled with horror. Years pass and the artist comes back after a long absence and goes to this house to see his pictures. Just as he reaches the room, a tragedy is impending. The curtain over the portraits had been drawn aside and before them stood the hapless pair, the man in his frenzy grasping his victim's hair with one hand while in the other he held an up-lifted knife to slay her. The artist interposes and saves her life and then with stern look said "Wretched lady, did I not warn you?" "You did", replied Elinor calmly. "But I loved him". "Is there not a deep moral in the tale?" continues Hawthorne, "Could the result of one or all our deeds be shad-

owed forth and set before us, some would call it Fate and hurry onward, others be swept along by their passionate desires and none be turned aside by the Prophetic Pictures". Does not Hawthorne voice a profound truth and does not the Greek Drama express something similar in its treatment of oracles?

The knowledge of the oracle does not save the man but as in the case of Oedipus, the impulsive nature flashing out in quick wrath brings upon him the doom he sought to escape.

In the *Antigone* of Sophocles, Teiresias earnestly and solemnly warns Creon but all in vain. The stubborn king entrenched in his obstinate purpose will not heed, but insults the prophet with base suspicion and brings down upon himself the full weight of woe. His own self-will and not the gods are the agents of his doom. Too late he sees himself in the true light and over his dead son the broken-hearted father cries out:

ΚΡΕΩΝ.

Στροφή α'.

ὦ,  
φρενῶν δυσφρόνων ἀμαρτήματα  
στερεὰ θανατέντ'.  
ὦ κτανόντας τε καὶ  
θανόντας βλέποντες ἐμφυλίου.  
1265 ὦμοι ἐμῶν ἀνολβα βουλευμάτων.  
ὦ παῖ, νέος νέψ' ξὺν μόρῳ,  
αἰαῖ αἰαῖ,  
ἔθες, ἀπελύθης,  
ἐμαῖς οὐδὲ σαῖσι δυσβουλαις.

ΧΟΡΟΣ.

1270 οἴμ' ὥς ἔοικας ὀψὲ τὴν δίκην  
ἰδεῖν.

Even the neutral Chorus finds its voice to condemn Creon and says:

ΧΟΡΟΣ.

καὶ μὴν ὃδ' ἀναξ αὐτὸς ἐφήκει  
μνήμ' ἐπίσημον διὰ χειρὸς ἔχων,  
εἰ θέμις εἰπεῖν, οὐκ ἀλλοτρίαν  
ἄτην, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ἀμαρτῶν.

CR. Woe for the sins of a darkened soul, stubborn sins, fraught with death! Ah, ye behold us, the sire who hath slain, the son who hath perished! Woe is me, for the wretched blindness of my counsels! Alas, my son, thou hast died in thy youth, by a timeless doom, woe is me!—thy spirit hath fled,—not by thy folly, but by mine own!

CH. Ah me, how all too late thou seemest to see the right!

CH. Lo, yonder the King himself draws near, bearing that which tells too clear a tale,—the work of no stranger's madness,—if we may say it,—but of his own misdeeds.



And when the added woe of his queen's death is made known, with heart-rending cry the hapless king exclaims :

CR. Ah me, this guilt can never be fixed on any other of mortal kind, for my acquittal! I, even I, was thy slayer, wretched that I am—I own the truth. Lead me away, O my servants, lead me hence with all speed, whose life is but as death!

ΚΡΕΩΝ.

Στροφή δ'.

ὦμοι μοι, τὰδ' οὐκ ἐπ' ἄλλον  
βροτῶν

1320 ἐμᾶς ἀρμόσει ποτ' ἐξ αἰτίας.

ἐγὼ γάρ σ' ἐγὼ ἔκανον, ὦ μέλεος,

ἐγὼ, φάμ' ἔνυμον, ἰὼ πρόσπολοι,

1325 ἄγετέ μ' ὅτι τάχος. ἄγετέ μ'

ἐκποδῶν

τὸν οὐκ ὄντα μᾶλλον ἢ μηδένα.

Where would be the great ethical teaching of the Greek Drama if it were merely the spectacle of men and women moving like automata to a destined end? In the Poetics Aristotle says, "The right thing, however, is in the Characters just as in the incidents of the play to endeavor always after the necessary as the probable; so that whenever such and such a personage says or does such and such a thing, it shall be the necessary or the probable consequence of it" (Poetics 1454a 34). What a personage says or does, reveals a certain moral purpose. Take for instance Antigone. Her noble nature rich in love for her brother can not leave him to be a wretched outcast in the world below but unhesitatingly she gives him burial though she knows full well the price of her act will be her own young life. There is no fatalism in this, but the unerring choice of one who feels in her heart the binding constraint of those unwritten laws "that are not of today or yesterday but live on forever" (456-7), and so she will obey no man's decree even that of an all-powerful king if it comes into conflict with those, but will fulfil the sacred obligations that piety and her own loving heart prescribe. The Greek Drama is character interpreted by action and in action. The plot gives a chance for the expression of character; what the man is, is shown by what he does. The logical outcome of character, the far-reaching consequences of acts, on these the drama is built. No sinful act ends with that act but bears in its train awful consequences so that we may see in a single house crime followed by crime, punishment by punishment, as in that of the ill-fated Atreidae until at last comes one pure and undefiled who does

the god's behest and the curse is stayed; but always the beginning of the evil is in one man's sin. The passion of Laius for Chrysippus leads him to sin, and punishment of childlessness is his sentence. Cf. Eur., *Phoenicians* 16–25. But though the oracle warns him of his doom if he beget a child, in a moment of passion when flushed with wine, he forgets the warning and then tries to escape the fulfilment of the prophecy by exposure of the hapless Oedipus. But it is folly then to attempt an escape and Oedipus fulfils the oracle by slaying his father Laius where the three roads meet on the way to Delphi. But this is not fatalism. Laius was forewarned but disobeyed the warning. Is not this one of the great truths of life? Do we not know—know to a certainty the outcome of certain courses of action, and yet we do the act and in some vague way hope to contrive an escape from the consequences? The Greek Drama recognizes clearly that “A man's character is his destiny”, *ἦθος ἀνθρώπου δαίμων*, as Heraclitus says. “The fate that overtakes the hero is no alien thing but his own self recoiling upon him for good or evil”.—Butcher's *Aristotle's Poetics*, page 354. We have a fine example of this in King Lear who pays for his folly as inexorably as any character in any Greek play.

De Quincey is one who maintains that the Greek Drama was a drama of destiny. “Man”, he says, “being the puppet of fate could not with any effect display what we call character; for the will which is the central pivot of character was obliterated, thwarted, cancelled by the dark fatalism which brooded over the Grecian stage. Powerful and elaborate character . . . would have been wasted, nay would have been defeated and interrupted by the blind agencies of fate”.

“It is strange”, says Mr. Butcher in his *Poetics of Aristotle*, page 348, “that the Greeks of all people and Aeschylus of all poets, should have been accused of depriving man of free agency and making him the victim of a blind fate. The central lesson of the Aeschylean drama is that man is the master of his own destiny. The retribution which overtakes him is not inflicted at the hands of cruel or jealous powers. It is the justice of the gods, who punish him for rebellion against their laws”. Agamemnon 750—781 gives clear teaching on this point.

Pindar and Aeschylus have the same moral code. Prosperity engenders pride and when a man's heart is lifted up within him, then he commits sin and sin brings punishment. The genealogy is *δλβος, κόρος, ὕβρις, ἄτη*. Prosperity, satiety, insolence, vengeance.

"The prosperity that produces pride and fullness of bread culminates in overweening insolence and outrage, and brings on itself mischief sent from heaven" as Professor Gildersleeve phrases it in his edition of Pindar, page XXXI. "If ever the watchers of Olympus honored any man, that man was Tantalus. But the high honor of friendly intercourse with the gods proved too much for Tantalus. He grasped after more than mortal might and so brought down upon himself unmeasured woe" (O. I).

In similar strain Bacchylides denounces *ὕβρις* in XIV [XV] 59 ff.:

*"Ὑβρις, ἃ πλ[ούτων] δύνανμιν τε θεῶς  
ἀλλότριοι ὥπασεν, αὐτὶς  
δ' ἐς βαθὺν πέμπει φόβον.  
κείνα καὶ ὑπερφιάλους  
Γᾶς παῖδας ὤλεσσαν Γίγαντας.*

"Insolence who swiftly gives a man his neighbor's wealth and power, but anon plunges him into a gulf of ruin,—she it was who destroyed the giants, overweening sons of earth".—Jebb. For the cardinal virtue of the Greeks is *σωφροσύνη*, measure moderation. Excess they condemned and deplored. They ring the changes on *μηδὲν ἄγαν*, nothing too much, the golden mean. Consciously or unconsciously they made this the canon of their art and literature and so they wrought the perfect work. In line with *σωφροσύνη* is the oft-repeated injunction to remember that we are mortals and can not venture too far. "Seek not to become Zeus", Pindar, I. 4(5), 14, *μὴ μάτευσ Ζεὺς γενέσθαι*. "Mortal things befit mortals", P. I. 5(4) 20, *θανατὰ θνατοῖσι πρέπει*.

The brazen heavens are not to be mounted, P. X. 27. But Aristotle reaches a loftier note, Nic. Ethics, XI, 7, 8: "Let us not listen therefore to those who tell us that as men and mortals, we should mind only the things of man and mortality; but so far as we may, we should bear ourselves as immortals and do all that in us lies to live in accord with that element within us, that sovereign principle of reason, which is our true self, and which in capacity and dignity stands supreme". Aristotle de-

finest virtue as the mean between two extremes, excess and deficiency, and condemns alike the too much and the too little. Courage is a virtue, rashness and cowardice are both vices. They are the extremes and courage is the mean. Pride goeth before a fall is the teaching of Herodotus. "Il croit à l'existence d'une loi qui gouverne les événements . . . C'est la vieille loi de la morale religieuse et poétique, la loi de la Némésis. Toute faute attire à l'homme une punition, mais surtout l'orgueil, qui est la faute irrémissible. Les échecs de Xerxès n'ont pas d'autre cause".—Manuel d'Histoire de la Lit. Grecque, page 393. Bury, *Anc. Gk. Hist.*, p. 68, says that the Persian overthrow according to Herodotus is "a divine punishment of the insolence and rashness that are often born of prosperity". In the Greek drama presumptuous pride, *ὑβρις*, is punished and punished heavily by the gods. Ajax the bravest of the Greeks after Achilles, over-confident in his strength and bravery dares to set the gods at naught and this Sophokles makes the central thought of his play of this name.

"Yea", said the seer, "lives that have waxed too proud, and avail for good no more, are struck down by heavy misfortune from the gods, as often as one born to man's estate forgets it in thoughts too high for man. But Ajax even at his first going forth from home, was found foolish, when his sire spake well. His father said unto him: 'My son, seek victory in arms but seek it ever with the help of heaven'. Then haughtily and foolishly he answered: 'Father, with the help of gods e'en a man of nought might win the mastery; but I, even without their aid, trust to bring that glory within my grasp'. So proud was his vaunt. Then once again, in answer to divine Athena, when she was urging him onward and bidding him turn a deadly hand upon his foes,—in that hour he uttered a speech too dread for mortal lips: 'Queen, stand thou beside the other Greeks; where Ajax stands, battle will never break our line'. By such words it was that he brought upon him the appalling anger of the goddess since his thoughts were too great for man".—Jebb's *Ajax of Sophocles*, lines 758 to 777. And to Odysseus Athena speaks clearest words of warning because of the wretchedness and disgrace Ajax has brought upon himself. "Therefore beholding such things, look that thine own lips never speak a haughty word against the gods, and

assume no swelling port, if thou prevailest above another in prowess or by store of ample wealth. For a day can humble all human things, and a day can lift them up; but the wise of heart are loved of the gods, and the evil are abhorred".—Jebb's *Ajax* of Sophocles, Lines 127 to 134.

Ajax deserves his fate at the hands of Athena yet the poet in meting out to him the doom his haughty pride has brought upon him, has not failed to set forth most beautifully the other side of his nature so that with mingled emotions of pity, admiration, and blame we mourn the sad end of one who with all his faults, still was a man cast in heroic mould.

Aristotle puts the emotions of pity and fear in the forefront of tragedy. By the interplay of these, the most tragic effects, he maintains, are produced. The *Ajax* well illustrates this. The haughty pride and fierce resentment of the hero, his murderous onslaught foiled by Athena, his ungovernable nature that can not brook with patience a wrong, his terrible humiliation, all fill us with awe and fear. In *Ajax* we see portrayed human nature in its pride and arrogance, over-confident in bravery and strength, calling down upon itself in its own act utter ruin. And then again our hearts are filled with pity at injustice dealt out to him which has embittered his soul, at the moving spectacle of this mighty man of valor brought thus low, at his deep sense of shame and his pathetic resolve not to survive his disgrace. There are other figures on the canvas, the narrow-minded Menelaus with his angry resentment and hatred, the loving Tecmessa with her tender and unselfish devotion, the magnanimous Odysseus who sees beyond the limits of his own feelings into the great truths of human experience, and the blunt loyal Teucer who makes his brother's cause his own. It is strange that anyone should have made the word classic synonymous with something cold and formal when Greek drama is all aglow with life and feeling. The men and women are men and women of like passions with ourselves, the red blood courses through their arteries, their pulses are set throbbing with the emotions that sweep over their souls and so they make our own hearts vibrate in sympathetic accord with their every mood because the passion of grief, the agony of distress and sorrow is made real to us, and in these wonderful creations of the

poet's fancy, we see before us real people baffled or triumphant, suffering or rejoicing, receiving the just recompense of their acts, with righteousness vindicated and wrong punished. The Greek drama makes a profound appeal to human feelings and so it is ageless forever, for though the seasons wax and wane and the revolving years swiftly roll on in their course, year giving place to year, yet human nature does not change, and always the poet who knows how to touch the deep springs of our nature has lasting power to charm and delight. The Greek imagination was greatly stirred by the sight of greatness brought low, of a king in the moment of his triumph struck down, of great prosperity changed in the twinkling of an eye to the extreme of adversity. The vicissitudes of fortune, the brevity of life, the insecurity of high place and station, these are their constant theme. Not man doomed but man vital, acting with passion and vigor, loving life and exulting in his powers and strength, and in his very exuberance of life and joy provoking fortune to his undoing, this is what the Greeks give us again and again. Take Hippolytus whom Euripides has portrayed with exquisite charm. All the freshness and buoyancy and loveliness of youth is his while his pure soul, abhorring all that is evil, worships only at the shrine of the virgin goddess, the chaste Artemis. But while he honors with every honor his beloved Artemis, he turns away in scorn and loathing from Aphrodite and the goddess punishes him for his contemptuous neglect. His faithful retainer, wise with the experience of years, utters a warning word but the youth is too confident in himself to pay any heed. It is an altogether human document, this drama, though gods intervene and play their part with the rest. Here again is a fertile field for misconception. It must be remembered that the Greeks lived on terms of familiar intercourse with their gods and goddesses and conceived of them as beings like themselves, only moving on a higher plane and greater and grander than mortals of daily life. Then too the Greeks with their vivid personifying power create a divinity of major or minor importance for all that we see or feel. So with them Phaedra is the victim of Aphrodite where we would say she was under the spell of a mad passion for Hippolytus; she was infatuated with the beautiful youth; she was a love-sick queen; she was driven

to distraction by the conflicting emotions in her soul. Moreover the Greek gods and goddesses never hold themselves far aloof from mortals but sometimes even fight with them on the battlefield and appear to them in visible presence to advise and direct. That is why the *θεὸς ἀπὸ μηχανῆς* in the Greek play is so far from being what it is sometimes represented as being, the poet's device for solving a situation that has become too complex to be solved otherwise. The appearance of the god or goddess is not alien to actual experience as in the story Herodotus tells of Pan before the battle of Marathon, and the final word spoken by god or goddess is by no means the last resort of a poet tangled up in a plot too intricate to be unraveled but gives the seal and impress of divine sanction for the issue desired, and the word of prophecy for the happy outcome in the future. Calm after storm, subsidence of emotion into a sense of peace and harmony, strife and turmoil followed by quiet acquiescence in the universal law, this is the rule of tragedy and for this the god or goddess comes with authority that can not be gainsaid. The *Hippolytus* of Euripides well illustrates the somewhat contradictory view of the Greeks on free will and divine agencies, for they no more than we are perfectly consistent. Phaedra has brooded over the cause of the misery in the lives of mortals and her conclusion is that "We know and understand the good but do not carry it out in action". "Some because they set some pleasure before the good" etc. 380 ff. She is admirably portrayed. Right-minded, holding up to herself right standards, but weak and vacillating, she is ready to succumb to her passion. It is noteworthy that the god or goddess who influences any particular character and holds sway over him is the one that is in accord with his own nature. Aphrodite's victim is peculiarly fitted to be her victim and the chaste Hippolytus has the chaste Artemis for his companion and the object of his worship. In the prologue Aphrodite tells how she will punish the chaste but haughty Hippolytus through Phaedra and yet throughout the play we forget all about the goddess as we see Phaedra yielding and resisting, ashamed and yet secretly in her heart consenting to the base plan of her loyal nurse, and then when the withering scorn of Hippolytus has burnt into her soul, covering her nurse with reproaches. And the nurse shrewdly

and a little bitterly, knowing her mistress all too well, replies "If I had succeeded, then I should be reckoned with the wise, for our wisdom is measured by our success". But in the end when Phaedra "ere she perished blasted in a scroll the fame of him her swerving made not swerve", there is no mention of any god or goddess then. Phaedra herself and by herself made the plan and executed it. When Hippolytus is dying, Artemis says the Cyprian willed for this to happen to fill up the measure of her wrath for his haughty neglect of her worship. But Artemis condemns Theseus because he destroyed his son without first weighing evidence or consulting seers or waiting for time to prove or disprove the baleful charge. Moral responsibility is the opposite of fatalism and no one can read the Greek dramas in their entirety without feeling that whatever outside forces are at work, whatever the inheritance may be, still after all man is a free agent and makes his choice for weal or woe. He has his chance but so dull is he or so perverse that rarely does he seize the golden opportunity and hence *γνώθι σεαυτόν; γνώθι καιρόν* were put forth by the Wise men of Greece as the primal need for true living. "For a brief span hath opportunity (*καιρός*) for man, but of him it is known surely when it cometh, and he waiteth thereon, a servant but no slave".—Pindar, Pyth. IV. 286.

This word *καιρός* Mr. Butcher thus defines: "Time charged with opportunity; our own possession to be seized and vitalized by human energy. Time the inert transformed into purposeful activity" (Harvard Lectures, page 119). Cf. Sophokles, *Elektra* 75 and 76: *καιρὸς γάρ, ὅσπερ ἀνδράσιν μέγιστος ἔργου παντός ἐστ' ἐπιστάτης*, "For opportunity is the best captain of all enterprise." (Storr.)

Plato, in his tale of Er in which he represents souls choosing a life for themselves, says emphatically *αἰτία ἐλομένων. θεὸς ἀναίτιος*; but after the choice is made, they must abide by it. Is this fatalism? Plato sounds his note of warning that the most earnest study and thought must be given that the choice may be a wise one since everything is involved in the choice. Looking at life as we see it, do we not say practically the same thing: As ye sow, so shall ye reap. "Ye have sown to the wind and have reaped the whirlwind". Is it not the law of life that to us has been entrusted the choice in great measure



of what our lives shall be and do we not pay the penalty or reap the reward according to our choice? Perhaps the Greeks press home the truth more strongly than we, because Christian teaching puts its emphasis on the possibility of reform even for one deeply dyed in sin, but even so, we know that the consequences of sin are inevitable and no repentance or change of life will make the character and life what it would have been, if the choice had been of the beautiful and good. But though the Greeks emphasize the punishment that waits upon sin and folly, yet if the sin is not too great, there comes release from the punishment and a new chance. If one should read Pindar's 7th Olympian Ode, he would find the Greek conception of life voiced clearly. Nemesis not fate is what the Greeks dwelt upon. "Those who have sinned, who have forgotten, who were absent" paid the penalty but even so, there came "sweet recompense for grievous disaster". *λῦσε δὲ Ζεὺς ἄφθιτος Τιβάνας* (Pyth. IV. 291). "The heavy stone that from the hand is hurled we can not check, nor word that leaves the tongue".

I do not for a moment deny that fate and fortune play a part in Greek literature and life, but that is quite different from calling the Greeks fatalists. Even where some god or goddess lays a heavy hand upon a hero as upon Herakles in the Trachiniae of Sophokles, Herakles, the type of the man of toils and burdens, yet after all, it is his own folly that destroys him, for with time, according to the Trachiniae of Sophocles he would have had release from his relentless taskmaster, had not his passion for Iole worked his undoing. But even so, his patient endurance and hard won conquests are shown in the Philoctetes to have received rich reward in the apotheosis of the hero. There is a passage in the Prometheus of Aeschylus, 511-575, that is often brought forward to prove that the Greeks held fate to be supreme over the gods even over Zeus himself and this is cited as conclusive evidence that the Greeks were fatalists. In this play Prometheus says: "Fate, the all-fulfiller, has otherwise decreed the end of these things" (511-515). The Chorus asks, "Who then holds the helm of necessity?" Prometheus replies: "The triple Fates and the mindful Erinyes". "And is Zeus weaker than these"? they ask. "Yes", Prometheus answers, "and therefore he cannot escape what is fated". This

positive statement of the supremacy of the fates is the more remarkable because elsewhere Aeschylus exalts the power of Zeus in no uncertain terms as the supreme power. To cite a few passages out of many; in the *Suppliants*, 1016 Tucker's edition, we have: "There is no o'erstepping the mighty impassable will of Zeus". And again in 875 ff.: "And regard thy suppliants, O almighty Zeus that swayest the earth (*γαῖόχε παγκρατὲς Ζεῦ*)". "Yet thine wholly is the beam of the balance and without thee, what cometh to pass for mortals?" (Theognis 157 uses the same figure: "Zeus inclines the balance one time one way and another, another.") Supp. 524 ff.: "King of kings, most blessed of the blest and most absolute of absolute powers, all-happy Zeus", *ἀναξ ἀνάκτων, μακάρων | μακάρτατε καὶ τελέων τελει- | ότατον κράτος, ὀλβιε Ζεῦ*. Clearly in these passages there is no subordination of Zeus to fate but on the contrary, he is represented as wielding all power, the supreme ruler of the universe. Can we reconcile the passage in the *Prometheus* with this? In the first place, we must remember that Prometheus who says these words is the bitter opponent of Zeus, stubborn in his resistance, implacable in his resentment and with unbending will enduring more than mortal agony rather than yield to the authority of Zeus. The haughty defiance of Prometheus kindles our admiration even though the poet through the Chorus shows us that he has sinned and is suffering justly because he has sinned, though he proudly refuses to recognize the fact. Prometheus is a marvellous creation of the poet's genius, for he has sinned not for himself but to help poor helpless humanity and while Zeus is justified in punishing him, yet his care for the welfare of mankind and his superb arrogance towards sovereign Zeus whom he deems an upstart tyrant, makes him the ideal tragic hero, whom we admire and yet condemn, whom we pity and yet blame, before whose sublime courage we stand in awe while we shudder at the awful suffering that racks his frame but cannot subdue his inflexible resolve. We must remember that this is but one play of the trilogy. There was also a *Prometheus Unbound* of which only a few fragments have come down to us but from these we find that in the end Zeus triumphs and Prometheus confesses his sin. Thereafter he takes his place among the gods of Olym-

pus but wears henceforth a willow wreath, the token of repentance, upon his brows (Athenaeus XV, 672 E, 674 D). However, I am far from saying that the Greeks were consistent in their utterances or beliefs and while in general Zeus is exalted to the supreme place, sometimes we find passages that seem to give predominance to fate, and while in general man is free to work out his own destiny, sometimes there is a doom upon him which he cannot escape. But do we not see precisely this in life? However we may explain it, do we not sometimes feel the futility of human endeavor? Do we not have the homely proverb, "Man proposes, God disposes"? Does not Shakespeare say "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will"? (Hamlet A. 5. Sc. 2.) And again: "What fates impose, that men must needs abide". (Henry VI, P. III, A. IV, Sc. 3.) "But O vain boast, who can control his fate"? (Othello, A. V, Sc. 2.) "Fate steals along with silent tread, found oftenest in what least we dread", says Cowper, A Fable. Have we not wrestled with the problem of Almighty power and predestination, God's foreknowledge and man's free will? But we are not fatalists and the Greeks no more were fatalists. Take the story of Pelops as Pindar tells it in the first Olympian ode. Enamoured of the lovely Hippodameia, he resolves to enter the lists to win her, though failure will be certain death. Alone in the darkness he stands upon the seashore and invokes the aid of Poseidon with whom in the past he has found favor. He knows full well the peril, for thirteen suitors already have been slain but nevertheless with undaunted courage he says: "Forasmuch as men must die, wherefore should one sit vainly in the dark through a dull and nameless age, without lot in noble deeds? Not so, but I will dare this strife. Do thou give the issue I desire." The gods help those who help themselves, so Poseidon grants his aid and Hippodameia is won. This is the true Greek spirit: daring in the face of peril, confidence in ability to achieve success, love of glory and honor and of the deeds that bring fame, and this is the theme of poet and orator as well. Where is any fatalism in this story? Pelops has determined to hazard his life for the prize that he longs for, and, thus resolved, he invokes the aid of the god. "But what of Oedipus?" the believer in fatal-

ism of the Greeks will ask. His destiny does seem to have been marked out for him, I grant, and yet Sophocles plainly shows even in his case that his own traits of character brought on the catastrophe and augmented it. This play is but one and might be taken as an illustration of what I have said that sometimes emphasis is put upon that something that seems to defy forethought and calculation and in some lives seems to bring disaster upon disaster culminating in utter ruin in spite of every well meant effort to avert the impending woe. But this play to the Athenian audience had something to teach quite apart from the truth of prophecy and oracular decree. They saw in it the lesson that was brought home to them again and again, that man cannot tread his path with sure self-confidence, but it may happen that in his very effort to save himself from peril, he may be rushing straight on to the dreaded evil. The play is a wonderful exponent of the irony of destiny and abounds in dramatic irony. In his loyal devotion to the state, Oedipus pronounces an awful curse upon the murderer of Laius whose presence is polluting the city, little dreaming that he is the guilty man himself and that it is upon his own head he is calling down this fearful imprecation. This was what wrought upon the souls of the Athenian audience and thrilled them with pity and fear, the consciousness of man's blindness and ignorance, the possibility that the seeming good may be evil, that when in all men's eyes Oedipus stood forth great and wise and when he was at the very pinnacle of power and honor, at that precise moment came the crushing blow that hurled him down to the deepest depths of misery. The play is most dramatic in conception and most dramatically worked out from point to point but many misread its meaning. They see in it merely the fulfilment of the oracle, a man in the toils of fate, but that was not what quickened the imagination of the Greeks, I repeat. The play wrought powerfully upon their thought and feeling because it illustrated so forcefully the painful truth that great power, high station, riches, honor, rest on no secure basis and the higher the height attained, the greater the fall may be. As Sophocles expresses it in *Philoctetes* 501 ff. Save me, pity me, seeing how all human destiny is full of fear and peril that good fortune may be followed by evil. He who stands clear

of trouble should beware of dangers and when a man lives at ease, then it is that he should look most closely to his life lest ruin come upon him by stealth.

Moreover, in the case of Oedipus, we must not forget that we have contrast of the opposite kind in the beautiful play of Oedipus at Colonus. There Oedipus is an outcast and wanderer, old and blind, to all men most pitiable, but it is then when he has become chastened and humbled that the gods lift him up and give to him an ending of life glorious almost beyond belief.

Shaks. Henry VIII, Act III, Scene 2:

"This is the state of man: Today he puts forth  
The tender leaves of hope, tomorrow blossoms,  
And bears his blushing honors thick upon him;  
The third day, comes a frost, a killing frost,  
And,—when he thinks, good easy man, full surely  
His greatness is a ripening,—nips his root,  
And then he falls, as I do."

A few years ago the changes were rung upon heredity and environment. What we were for weal or woe, for good or evil, was all marked out for us from the cradle to the grave, and we were the merest automata with no more volition than marionettes. But in spite of all that was said, and said learnedly in confirmation, the sober sense of people rose in revolt. For we know that we can change our inheritance, that we can rise superior to circumstances, that there are currents and cross currents in life and even in a wretched environment there may be opened a door of opportunity and success. But heredity and environment are something to reckon with and they do lay a heavy hand on many. The family where there is the stain of a great crime, the family that has evil upon evil charged to its account, does fasten a taint upon the offspring, and unless he be of heroic mould and purpose, he too will follow on in the same way and add to the count of crime and wrong. Is not the life of the individual inextricably bound up with the life of the family? Does not the newborn come into life with the inherited blessing of the house shining bright upon him or with the curse casting its dark shadow over him? This truth the Greeks have embodied in those wonderful tales of illustrious but guilty families, but

even so, the case is not hopeless, for Orestes stays the curse on the Atreidae and the upright Thersander is proof against the evil of the Labdacidae. The Greeks have set forth the inherited blessing and curse so graphically that they have impressed men's minds with this to the exclusion of the rest of their teaching. While they did give this a place, they also saw other aspects of life and this was only one element in their poetry and far from being the central pivotal theme. Much more do they dwell upon this, that man is free, but while, exulting in his freedom, he ranges wide in thought and fancy, Zeus and his laws he must hold in reverence. "Insolence is the very child of impiety but from healthfulness of soul cometh what all desire and pray for—happiness."—Verrall's *Eumenides*, 536–540. In dealing with the Greeks, we must remember we are dealing with a people of vivid imagination to whom the created world was instinct not only with life and energy, but had something of the divine as well, and so the rippling laughing streams had their naiads and the murmuring swaying trees their dryads, and the forest glades and mountain hollows their nymphs while the fifty Nereids in radiant beauty danced amid ocean's dancing waves; and so, thought and fancy played over all nature, weaving and interweaving those many stranded myths of perennial freshness and charm. And not simply the world of the sensible realities but abstract qualities were not conceived of as cold abstractions but they too had the imprint of the divine, the warmth and the glow, *αἰδώς* reverence and compassion, and *δίκη* enthroned with Zeus, and *ἄρκος* oath, the servant of Zeus who witnesseth all things. So perhaps also *Μοῖρα* the allotment of Zeus to mortals, becomes a deity but only 3 times even in Homer do we find the *Μοῖραι* regarded as persons who at the birth of each man weave for him the lot of life and death. What is the meaning of this word *Μοῖρα*? It comes from *μεῖρομαι* to divide and means part, allotted portion. Each god has his own allotted portion or province—a certain department of nature or field of activity. Poseidon thus refers to Zeus, *Il. XV*, 187 ff.: *τρῆς γάρ τ' ἐκ Κρόνου εἰμὲν ἀδελφεοί . . . τριχθὰ δὲ πάντα δέδασται, ἕκαστος δ' ἔμμεορ ἐτιμῆς . . . καὶ κρατερός περ ἑών, μενέτω τριτάτῃ ἐνὶ μοίρῃ*, "We are three brothers and in three lots are all things divided and each took his appointed domain (or privilege,

status) ; masterful though he be, let him stay quiet in his own third part." Compare these passages for the meaning of *μοῖρα* : Bacchylides IV 20, "to receive a full portion of blessings", *λαγχάνειν ἅπο μοῖρα[ν ἐς]θλῶν*. Eur. Medea, 995: *δύστανε, μοίρας ὅσον παροίχη*, "Wretched man, you are at fault respecting your lot" (lit. have strayed beyond it).—Allen and Moore. "*μοίρας* here is *εὐδαιμονίας*"—Earle. Soph. Antig. 895: *κάτειμι, πρὶν μοι μοῖραν ἐξήκειν βίου*, "I shall go down (to death) before the term of my life is spent". Soph. Antig. 170: *ὅτ' οὖν ἐκείνοι πρὸς διπλῆς μοίρας μίαν καθ' ἡμέραν ὤλοντο παίσαντές τε καὶ πληγέντες αὐτόχειρι σὺν μιάσματι*, "Since then these have fallen in one day by a two-fold doom, each smitten by the other, each stained with a brother's blood". Here it has no more force than *θάνατος* death. Eur. Med. 987: *τοῖον εἰς ἔρκος πεσείται καὶ μοῖραν θανάτου δύστανος*, "Such is the snare into which she will fall and doom of death, poor girl". Eur. Med. 856: *πῶς δ' ὄμματα προσβαλοῦσα τέκνοις ἄδακρυν μοῖραν σχήσεις φόνον;* "and still without a tear retain thy blooded purpose" (doom of slaughter.—Coleridge). Eur. Med. 1281: *αὐτόχειρι μοῖρα κτενεῖς*, "You will slay with fate made by thine own hand". Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, Vol. V, p. 447: "We may be certain that *μοῖρα* and *τύχη* did not arise owing to the force of the conception of an over-ruling fate, but more probably as unpretentious daimones of birth, who gave his lot to the infant. As Democritus well said, 'Men have feigned an image of luck, a mask of their own folly'". Eur. Iph. T. 205: *ἐξ ἀρχᾶς λόχια στερρὰν παιδείαν Μοῖραι ξυντείνουσιν θεαί*, "From the beginning have the fates, the goddesses who presided at my birth, stretched out for me a cruel childhood". The fates are goddesses of childbirth here. Pindar, Pyth. IV, 145:

*Μοῖραι δ' ἀφίσταντ', εἴ τις ἔχθρα πέλει  
δμογόνοις αἰδῶ καλύψαι.*

Fairbanks, *Greek Religion*, p. 310: "*Μοῖρα* (often translated fate) is not any power higher than the gods, and therefore the ultimate background of the universe; it would be truer to call it the conscience of the gods. As men ought to uphold the moral order, ought not to act *ὑπὲρ νόρον*, so the gods feel under obligation to uphold the moral order of the universe. . . . The existence of natural law in the physical world and of eternal principles in the moral world early

made a deep impression on the Greek mind. . . . The precepts in the Works and Days of Hesiod, or in the poetry of Theognis and Solon, embody the thought of generations on law and order in the physical world and in the moral world". P. 140: "It is Zeus who dispenses good and evil to men, Zeus to whom the epic heroes commonly pray. . . . As an actor in the poem, however, Zeus cannot always follow his personal desires. When Sarpedon is hard pressed by Patroclus, Zeus questions whether to let his friend die or snatch him away to his home in Lycia till Hera reminds him that it is Sarpedon's lot to die at this time. 'Neither men nor gods can ward it off, when the baneful lot of death overtakes a man'. Is this lot or portion a fate higher than Zeus? Or is it part of the 'ancient decrees of the gods' which Zeus is bound to obey? The question is never asked in such form by the poet who recognizes no power higher than that of Zeus". "If Zeus saved Sarpedon, he would be acting *ὑπὲρ μόρον*, contrary to the 'ought' which he felt binding on himself", p. 141.

Cornford, F. M., *From Religion to Philosophy*, p. 13 f.: "Further, as in the Ionian philosopher, so in Homer, the ordinance of fate is not a mere blind and senseless barrier of impossibility: it is a moral decree—the boundary of right and wrong. We may even say that the two notions of Destiny and Right are hardly distinguished. This comes out in the phrase 'beyond what is ordained', 'beyond fate' (*ὑπὲρ μόρον*, *ὑπὲρ αἶσαν*), which in Homer halts between the two meanings: 'beyond what is destined, and so must be', and 'beyond what is right, and so ought to be'. Thus, when the first sense—destiny—is uppermost, it is denied that God can make anything happen 'beyond fate', *Il. VI. 487*. But elsewhere we find on the contrary that things do happen 'beyond fate'. In the *Iliad XVI, 780*, the Achaeans prevail for a time in battle *ὑπὲρ αἶσαν*. *Od. I. 32*, 'beyond what is ordained'. Here, it is evident, the moral sense is uppermost. The offenders went beyond, not their fate, but the bounds of morality. Hence in such cases the balance is redressed by swiftly following vengeance, which itself is 'beyond what is ordained' in the sense that the sinners brought it upon themselves by their own wickedness, so that they, and not fate, are responsible". When Croesus (*Hdt. I. 91*) blames the oracle for his defeat, Apollo throws the



responsibility upon Croesus because he took the interpretation that pleased him without further inquiry, and Croesus thereupon acknowledges that it was his fault and not that of the god. Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, I, p. 79: "The casting the lots of Hector and Achilles into the scale cannot be interpreted as a questioning of the superior will of fate, for Zeus never does this elsewhere; the act might as naturally be explained as a divine method of drawing lots, or as Welcker prefers, as a symbol of his long and dubious reflection". Cf. Il. XXII, 209:

καὶ τότε δὴ χρύσεια πατὴρ ἐτίτανε τάλαντα,  
 ἐν δ' ἐτίθει δύο κῆρε πανηλεγέος θανάτοιο,  
 ἔλκε δὲ μέσσα λαβῶν, ῥέπε δ' Ἑκτορος αἵσιμον ἡμᾶρ  
 ὥχετο δ' εἰς Ἀΐδαο, λίπεν δέ ἐ Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων,

"Then it was that the Father drew out to their length the golden scales and therein he put 2 lots of death that bringeth long woe, and lifted them off the ground and down sank for Hector the day of doom". See Note in Leaf and Bayfield's edition, Il. VIII. 69; XVI. 658; XIX. 223.

"Μοῖρα is a sort of natural law; man or god may act contrary to it; and if he does, man or god, the result is the same—he pays the penalty for his folly".—Fairbanks, *The Myth. of Greece and Rome*, pp. 40, 41. αἶσα properly means measure. Cf. Il. XV. 207, "When a messenger showeth discretion", ὅτ' ἄγγελος αἶσιμα εἶδῃ.

The Μοῖραι in all periods received but scant worship. Zeus has the Cult name Μοιραγέτης the leader or guide of fate, in the Altis of Olympia, Paus. 5, 15, 5, and again in Arcadia, Paus. 8, 37, 1, and this "formula", Farnell says, "unconsciously expressed the deepest views of Greek philosophy. . . . The Stoic view had but little to do with the average belief, and the astrological aspect of destiny belongs mainly to the decadence of the Greek world".—*Cults*, I, p. 83.

After a careful study of all the passages in Sophokles bearing on the relation of Zeus to the Μοῖραι, Dr. Josef Kohn, *Zeus und sein Verhältnis zu den Moirai nach Sophokles*, reaches this result: that the Μοῖραι do have a personal existence; that they are subordinated to Zeus; that their activity is more or less completely in the background while Zeus appears as the sole ruler of the world and guide of the fate

allotted by him with wisdom to each one. Cf. El. 175: "Great still in heaven is Zeus, who sees and governs all",

ἔτι μέγας οὐρανῷ  
Zeὺς δὲ ἐφορᾷ πάντα καὶ κρατύνει.

Antig. 604 ff.: τεὰν, Ζεῷ, δύνασιν τίς ἀνδρῶν ὑπερβασία κατάσχοι;

Welcker, in his Griech. Goetterlehre, I, p. 185, has shown that in Homer the doom of god is habitual and he strongly denies that in the Homeric *μοῖρα θεῶν*, there is the conception of an overruling destiny to whose dictates even the gods must bow. Il. XXIV, 527 ff., *δοιοὶ γάρ τε πίθοι κατακείται ἐν Διὸς οὔδει*. Here Zeus is the dispenser of evil and good. Il. XV, 107:

φησὶν γὰρ ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσιν  
κάρτεϊ τε σθένει τε διακριδὼν εἶναι ἄριστος.  
τῷ ἔχεθ' ὅττι κεν ὕμμι κακὸν πέμψῃσιν ἐκάστω.

Zeus is supreme. Therefore be patient with whatever evil he sends upon each.

The word fate is used loosely in translation, as it is in common speech, and this leads to misconception. Soph. El. 1485 ff.:

τί γὰρ βροτῶν ἂν σὺν κακοῖς μεμιγμένῳ  
θνήσκειν ὁ μέλλων τοῦ χρόνου κέρδος φέροι;

"When mortals are in the *meshes of fate*, how can such respite avail one who is to die?"—Jebb.

The great idea which Ionia contributed to human thought was that of the universal rule of law. It is one and the same law that runs through the physical and the moral world. "The sun will not overpass his bounds, or the Erinnyes, the ministers of justice, will find him out"; Heraklit. Fr. 29 (94), *Ἥλιος οὐχ ὑπερβήσεται μέτρα· εἰ δὲ μή, Ἑρινύες μιν δίκης ἐπίκουροι ἐξειρήσουσι*.

This recognition of order, law in the universe is embodied in proverbial sayings. Eur. Hel. 513-514:

λόγος γὰρ ἐστίν, οὐκ ἔμός, σοφῶν δ' ἔπος,  
δεινῆς ἀνάγκης οὐδὲν ἰσχύειν πλέον.

Soph. Antig. 1106, *ἀνάγκη δ' οὐχὶ δυσμαχίτεον*. Euripides shows the influence of philosophical speculations in his remarkable prayer in the Troades 884 ff.:

ὦ γῆς ὄχημα κάπῃ γῆς ἔχων ἔδραν,  
δστις ποτ' εἰ σύ, δυστόπαστος εἰδέναι,  
Ζεὺς, εἴτ' ἀνάγκη φύσεος εἴτε νοῦς βροτῶν,  
προσηνξάμην σε.

And again the philosopher poet in the *Alkestis* (962 ff.) makes the Chorus say:

ἐγὼ καὶ διὰ μούσας  
καὶ μετάρσιος ἤξα, καὶ  
πλείστων ἀψάμενος λόγων  
κρείσσον οὐδὲν Ἀνάγκας  
ἡὔρον,

"Myself have traced the muses' path, have soared amid the stars, have laid hold on many a theme and yet have found naught stronger than necessity".—Coleridge's translation. Cf. *Simonides* 3 (12), 16: ἀνάγκη δ' οὐδὲ θεοὶ μάχονται. But in these passages the word is ἀνάγκη, and such utterances had little influence in moulding daily life and thought. They have contributed much, however, towards a misunderstanding of the Greek attitude on such questions. The riddle of the universe is still a riddle, and if the Greeks, while maintaining the omnipotence of Zeus, sometimes talked of an over-ruling necessity, it is not to be wondered at, but too much stress ought not to be laid upon it. Lucian may exercise his wit upon it as in *Zeus, the Tragedian*, where he makes Zeus say, "We have nothing to do with taking vengeance but the fates weave his death for each man", but Zeus is still Zeus to the Greeks for all these stray utterances, and the ruler of the universe.

Ζεὺς τοι κολαστὴς τῶν ὑπερκόμπων ἄγαν  
φρονημάτων ἔπεστιν, εὐθυνος βαρύς,

"Zeus is a judge who visits heavily all whose self-glorious spirit vaults too high". (*Aesch. Persians* 827 f. with Bury's translation.)

A question of this kind, however, cannot be settled by citations and the statistical method, but is determined rather by the ideals and the general trend of life and especially by the way the heroes and heroines are delineated in literature. Take *Odysseus* and what do we find? A typical Greek, resourceful, ready to meet emergencies, quick-witted, and daring. We find in the *Odyssey* a curious interplay between divine agencies, and human strength and prowess. Of himself *Odysseus* gets the better of the Cyclops when his venturesomeness has nearly cost him his life and there is nothing cleverer in the whole story than the cunning by which he makes his escape, but in

his meeting with Circe he is fortified against her magic arts by the antidote that he has received from Hermes; on the other hand, he has strength in himself alone to hold out against Calypso of the radiant hair, not yielding even to the seductive lure of becoming an immortal but unwavering in his deep longing for his native land and those he has left behind. His companions are fine examples of those who are amply warned but, notwithstanding, perish through their own folly. It is his own heart that Odysseus chides and not the gods in XX, 18, when he is trying to regain his own upon his return to his own land, *τέτλαθι δῆ, κραδίη· καὶ κύντερον ἄλλο ποτ' ἔτλης*. As Odysseus is portrayed, ready for any emergency, with a keen love of knowledge, venturesome, energetic, resourceful, hopeful, sometimes cast down and in fear but soon gathering his forces together for new endeavor, alert, active, with mind quick to conceive and courage to execute, what has he in common with the stolid fatalist who grimly says "If it must come, it must, and there is nothing I can do to change it".

Not man's impotence, but man's power, not his limitations but his achievements, is the favorite theme of the Greeks, as in the chorus of the *Antigone*: "Many wonders there are but nothing more wonderful than man".

332. *πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κούδεν ἀνθρώπου δεινότερον πέλει.*

360. *παντοπόρος ἄπορος ἐπ' οὐδὲν ἔρχεται.*

The danger is that he will be led astray by his very strength and power. "Seek not to become Zeus", says Pindar, in the 4th Isthmian. "Mortal things befit mortals". This is the keynote of Greek teaching.

No dark, sinister fate hovers over them, chilling enterprise and benumbing their hearts. Their gods are not inflexible in their purpose or inexorable. In II. XVI 523 ff. Glaukos prays Apollo to heal him of his wound that he may rescue Sarpedon's body, and Apollo grants him his wish. "The saying is, gifts persuade even the gods", Eur. *Medeia*, 964,

*πείθειν δῶρα καὶ θεοὺς λόγος.*

The Greeks were wonderful interpreters of life. Clear-eyed they looked out upon the world and knew how to register what they saw so that it lives again to those who read. And what did they see? They saw what anyone who goes through

life and reflects upon it sees, that calculate as we will, forecast events as we may, however fortunate and successful we may be, there is an incalculable element with which we have to reckon, outside and beyond the reach of any effort of ours. Before this we stand powerless; the unforeseen intervenes, our purposes are frustrated, our endeavors baffled, our success changed to failure, our prosperity to ruin.

Life is a game of whist. From unseen sources  
The cards are shuffled and the hands are dealt;  
Blind are our efforts to control the forces  
That though unseen are not less strongly felt.

—*Ironquill.*

We say "Mysterious are the workings of Providence." "We know not what a day will bring forth". "God's ways are inscrutable and past our finding out." "Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself". All of which means that there is some mysterious power working its will in the world in unaccountable ways and with tragic consequences at times.

"Count no man happy till his death", said the wise Solon, and this the Greeks repeat again and again in their literature. So, for example, Simonides 17 (46):

*"Ἀνθρῶπος ἐὼν μήποτε φάσῃς ὃ τι γίνεταί αὐριον,  
μηδ' ἄνδρα ἰδὼν ὀλβιον, ὅσσον χρόνον ἔσσεται·  
ὥκεια γάρ, οὐδὲ τανυπτερύγον μύϊας  
οὕτως ἂ μετὰστασις.*

What do the Greeks say?

They say: "Man is a free agent, but with an ancestral heritage for blessing or bane. Man is a free agent, but subject to forces he cannot control, happenings he cannot foresee. Man is a free agent, but the area of his powers is hedged about with impassable limits. Man is a free agent but he is mortal". Do not we say the same? Who has ever been able to set the bounds and mark out where free agency ends and divine working begins? But this does not prevent us any more than it prevented the Greeks from trying to carve out our fortunes, from believing that we are, measurably at least, masters of our fate.

Wherein was the greatness of the Greeks? Was it not in that creative genius essentially free and untrammelled which they possessed to such a marked degree and which found ex-

pression in their matchless literature and art? Was it not in the free play of thought and fancy that ranged at will and delighted in its ranging? Freedom of thought, freedom of action, love of the beautiful, incessant activity, joy in living, eager emulation in pursuit of honor and glory, fertility of resource and confidence in their own resolute daring, all this is incontestably theirs and all this is diametrically opposed to any fatalistic doctrine, to anything bordering on patient and unquestioning submission to the fixed and unalterable decrees of fate. But they did not deceive themselves.

“In a little moment groweth up the delight of men; yea, and in like sort falleth it to the ground, when a doom adverse hath shaken it. Things of a day—what are we, and what not? Man is a dream of shadows”. Then comes the other note: “Nevertheless when a glory from God hath shined on them, a clear light abideth upon men and a serene life”.—Pindar, *Pyth.* VIII. 92 ff:

ἐν δ' ὀλίγῳ βροτῶν  
τὸ τερπνὸν αὖξεται· οὕτω δὲ καὶ πίτνει χαμαί,  
ἀποτρόπῳ γνῶμα σεσεισμένον.  
ἐπάμεροι· τί δέ τις; τί δ' οὐ τις; σκιᾶς ὄναρ  
ἄνθρωπος· ἀλλ' ὅταν αἵγλα διόσδοτος ἔλθῃ,  
λαμπρὸν φέγγος ἔπεστιν ἀνδρῶν καὶ μείλιχος αἰών.

ABBY LEACH.